

Russia as a 'virtual great power': implications of its declining role in European and Eurasia security

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"Russia as a 'Virtual Great Power': Implications for its Declining Role in European and Eurasian Security"^{*}

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Summary: *Instead of analyzing just some recent developments of Russia's domestic, foreign and security policies, this article focuses in particular on mid- and long-term strategic trends and their consequences of Russia's decline for European and Eurasian Security. It argues that Russia is still in a long-term socio-economic decline and it is unrealistic to expect that Moscow will regain its former status as a Great Power or even Superpower in the mid-term future even in the case if its economy and military power will improve more rapidly and substantially. Against this background, two other powers of the Eurassian landmass, the EU and China will rather surpass Russia in international standing and secure great power status in the coming decades with farreaching consequences for the international system and Russia's security as well as for its role in Europe and Central as well as East Asia. In this light, the article analyzes strategic trends in domestic, foreign and security policies, including the impact of often overlooked factors such as demographic trends and the health crisis, of decentralization, regionalization and fragmentation within the Russian Federation, the future of Russia's military reform policies (including Russia's draft military doctrine of October 1999 and its nuclear illusions) and their implications for Russia's future foreign and security policies.*

"... the country's territorial integrity is one of the major 'domestic' tasks of our diplomacy. In fact, Russia's security and its future depends on this issue. The need to actively oppose separatism is not limited to Russia alone. Other countries are also endangered by armed separatists. Not infrequently separatists are fighting under the banner of self-determination for ethnic minorities. It goes without saying that in Russia and elsewhere the rights of ethnic minorities should be protected: otherwise neither democracy nor peace are possible. It should be said, however, that the slogan 'Self-determination up to separation' is no longer

valid. Other forms should be used: real, rather than fictitious, self-administration of ethnic minorities within larger states are one of such forms. This is the only way to avoid endless bloody conflicts that claim thousands of lives and in the final analysis, fail to create better conditions for the smaller nations.”

(Former Foreign and Prime Minister, *Yevgeni Primakov*, in one of his latest foreign policy speeches as foreign minister, delivered in Winterthur, Switzerland, 2 June 1998¹)

The Analytical Framework: The Fall of a Great Power – Russia As the New ‘Sick Man of Europe’

When Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree on 9 August 1999 firing Sergei Stepashin after only four months in office (he succeeded Prime Minister Evgeni Primakov who had only eight months in office) in order to maintain his political power, he dissolved the fourth Russian government in 17 months. By throwing Russia into a new political crisis and appointing Vladimir Putin, the former head of Russia’s Federal Security Service (and a high-ranking senior Soviet KGB spy in Germany) and former secretary of the Kremlin’s Security Council, as the new Prime Minister, many Western observers and politicians have considered Russia as increasingly unpredictable and unreliable. It has cast an ever larger shadow over Russian politics, the Russian population, and Russia’s relation with the West. In one of his latest interviews as Prime Minister, Stepashin had already warned the administration and population with the words: ‘If we do not come to our senses we will lose Russia.’² Indeed, ‘good governance’ has become the key factor for the country’s future development.

Instead of analyzing current events such as concrete implications of the conflict in Dagestan, the money-laundering inquiry, reflecting the debate ‘Who has lost Russia’, NATO’s extension to the east or the 1999 Kosovo crisis and NATO’s humanitarian intervention or offering concrete perspectives on the political shifts in the Duma for the presidential elections in March 2000 (important as they are), this paper will focus rather on the mid- and long-term strategic trends and consequences of Russia’s decline for European and Eurasian Security.

Since the collapse of communism, the Russian Federation has achieved remarkable progress – at least at the first glance. Today Russians can freely decide their own future. Democracy and market economy have taken root, though it is insufficient and often in a way that is rather disappointing. Meanwhile, the majority of people have lost hope and feel increasingly humiliated. Simultaneously, Russia is confronted with widespread corruption and organized crime from top to bottom. The essence of a real functioning democracy is lacking: an assured, law-based process for political decision-making and for protecting human and civil rights.

In addition, the financial collapse of August 1998 has shattered all hopes in Russia for an economic revival in the short-term perspective. To some extent, it also marked the failure of the West's policy and its often unrealistic expectations during the last seven years, to transform Russia rapidly into a normal Western power with a pluralist democracy and a well-functioning market economy within a decade.

However, Russia is not lost as some Western commentators and politicians seem to believe.³ It is necessary to see Russia's tragedy in its transformation processes – with all its negative circumstances – in a rather longer historical process. To some extent, the economic and social gap between Russia and the West is a constant topic of discussion within Russia since Peter the Great. But even 'market-economy reforms' (so to speak) since 1991 have not led to a real revival of the economy and significant improvement in living standards, but rather to a permanent stagnation.

In this regard, it is necessary to remember that Russia's economic weakness and insufficiencies did not begin with the Yeltsin-era or with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Soviet Union was already in the mid-70s in an era of 'stagnation'.⁴ Since that time, Russia's power status in the world and in Europe has continuously declined. But it took another ten years before the new Soviet leadership under Gorbachev initiated a reform policy which ultimately destroyed the old economic and political system. Against this wider historical background, the question of the future of Russia's power and its status in the world as well as in Europe has to be addressed and discussed. Presently, Russia seems still in a long-term decline and it is unrealistic that Moscow will regain its former status as Great Power of the first rank in the mid-term future even if its economy and military improve rapidly and substantially (which seems rather unlikely).

Two other powers of the Eurasian landmass, the European Union and China will likely surpass Russia in international standing and secure superpower status in the coming decades with far-reaching consequences for the international system and Russia's security as well as its role in Europe.⁵ The discussion of China's forthcoming admission to the WTO has already highlighted these strategic changes underway on the regional and global level. It may widen the gap between major trading partners (including China) and those countries (such as Russia) which are still outside of the global trade organization and have missed the opportunities they (such as Moscow) had some years ago.

These strategic trends have, indeed, historical dimensions. Although the further decline of the Russian Federation will increase numerous security challenges for the West and Europe, it also offers new opportunities for mutual cooperation which might help to prevent a breakup of the Russian Federation or any other extreme outcome –

if both sides will use the opportunity. At the same time, for a variety of reasons and despite its military-technological superiority, its vigorous and mostly successful diplomacies and its excellent economic long-term prospects, American dominance over the international political system (*'Pax Americana'*), nonetheless, will progressively fade during the twenty-first century. In the mid-term perspective, the U.S. will also become more dependent on others which will hinder those political forces in Washington who still favor unilateral instead of multilateral strategies. On the Russian side as well, an important prerequisite has to be taken into account before a real strategic partnership between the West and Russia can be initiated: closing the gap between its traditional great power ambitions and the economic as well as political realities. Without closing that gap, neither an economic revival of Russia nor a real strategic dialogue with Russia seems realistic. And if Russia does not stop trying to behave like a great power, it may eventually cease to be even a great country too. Then Moscow and the West might be confronted with a totally new situation, already described by Thomas E. Graham as a 'World without Russia'.⁶

So far, little analytical investigation has been made in regard to the strategic consequences of the long-term decline of Russia's power. In this regard, Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* remains relevant in this context.⁷ According to his conclusions, the relative strengths of the leading nations in world affairs never remain constant due to the fact of the uneven rate of growth among different societies and of the technological as well as organizational breakthroughs. Once this productive capacity is enhanced, they find it easier to sustain the burdens of paying for large-scale armies and fleets. If, however, too large a proportion of the state's resources is diverted from the creation of wealth and allocated instead to military purposes, it might lead to a weakening of national power in the long-term perspective. Furthermore, an 'imperial overstretch' increases the risk that the potential benefits from external expansion may be outweighed by the expense of this strategic aim.

Russia's economic weaknesses and unsolved domestic problems are manifest⁸ as follows:

- Even before the collapse of Russia's financial system in August 1998, according to World Bank calculations, Russia's economy would have been about as big as Spain's, but smaller than Canada's or even Indonesia's. The per capita output in 1997 was actually lower than in Lebanon or Peru. At the same time, the GDP produced by Russia's shadow economy has risen from 10-11 per cent in 1990-91 to 27 per cent in 1993, 46 per cent in 1996 and probably more than 50 per cent

during last years.⁹ Accordingly, the standard of living of the average Russian has fallen by up to 30 per cent. At the same time, the number of Russians living in poverty has increased from 33 million in 1998 to 55 million in 1999. Hence nearly four of every ten people live below the official subsistence level, defined as a monthly income below 829 rubles which is equivalent to US\$34. The average monthly wage equaled in the summer of 1999 about US\$50 down from US\$200 in August 1998. The average pension equaled even only to some US\$17.¹⁰ During the first months of 1999, Russia's status declined from 18th to 20th place in a ranking of world exporters and from 19th to 27th in a ranking of importers.¹¹ Given its continuing domestic instability and failing legal framework, Russia continues to attract less than one per cent of worldwide foreign direct investment. As a new analysis has concluded, even if Russia were to achieve annual growth rates of five per cent after 2000 (which seems rather unlikely), it would still take more than 15 years to return to the country's economic level of ten years ago.¹²

- According to a new study of the Institute of International Finance (IIF), the legal and illegal capital flight in Russia has averaged between US\$1.5 and US\$2 billion every single months since 1992. That means a total around the astronomical sum of US\$168 billion as the result of corruption, criminal profits and primarily the wish to evade taxes. Even when one concludes a lower figure for the capital flight, the problem reflects the widespread feeling of uncertainty in Russia due to factors such as overall economic instability, weak enforcement of property rights, an arbitrary and confiscatory tax system, and a poorly functioning banking system with inadequate supervision and regulation.¹³ Thereby, the major problem is not so much corruption itself than the deeper-rooted Russian business practices which prevail instead of a legal or business culture as in the West.
- Any future process of reform and transformation of the economy is closely linked with the transformation of the political system. And any economic revival depends on improving the future competitiveness of Russia's economy on the global markets.¹⁴ However, there is no clear current consensus in Russia on both the need and the pattern for change or any long-term strategies.
- In the light of this geo-economic and geopolitical change in the 'international balance of forces' and the fear of becoming rather an object of competition among more advanced (like the West) and newly arising powers (such as China), many domestic discussions of Russia's future foreign and security policies become

much more understandable. The current war in Dagestan and the North Caucasus reflects these wider fears existing in Russia: according to those Russian domino-theories, the loss of parts or entire Dagestan is perceived with the loss of the entire North Caucasus and sometimes even more (although I do not believe that the Russian Federation will break up like the Soviet Union, as I will outline below). What Russia claims to prevent, may happen as the result of its short-sighted policies such as the current war in Dagestan and Chechnya. It might destabilize the entire North Caucasus and backfire on the cohesion of its own Federation (with regions such as Tartastan).¹⁵

- Given Russia's size, geographic location, economic resources and cultural legacy as determining indicators of being a Great Power in the past, it is nowadays no longer certain whether these factors will really determine a Great Power status in the twenty-first century. And even one maintains believe in those indicators of a Great Power status, Russia's socio-economic factors are not encouraging in a way that a revival of Russia's power is inevitable and only a question of time.
- Furthermore, many factors and challenges are often overlooked.¹⁶ Russia's health crisis (widespread outbreaks of diseases such as typhus, cholera, diphtheria and others), is one of those issues, which will hinder an economic recovery in the short- and mid-term future.¹⁷ The crude death rates, for instance, were in the first half of 1998 nearly 30 percent higher than they had been at the end of the 1980s. Russia's death rate is exceeding its birth rate by well over half – about 700,000 a year. The overall life expectancy has fallen in 1997 to under 67 years, for males it is just around 61 years. For comparative analyses it is important to note that similar mortality crisis in the past in Germany, Spain, Japan, and South Korea were in one or another way the direct result of wars or civil wars and not of peacetime. According to analytical forecasts, while the Russian Federation contained the world fifth's largest population at the Soviet Union's final days, its population will shrink to be no larger than ninth in the world by 2020. Life expectancy then will be lower than those of 125 of the 188 countries in the world. During the first six months of 1999, the Russian population has further declined by 406.200 according to the Russian Statistics Agency. By 2016, it will be fall by eight million. At present, every 100 Russian women have only 124 children – 111 fewer than the rate needed to keep the population stable.¹⁸ By 2050, it could lose half of its population due to dramatic rise of diseases and pollution that could lead to severe political instability.¹⁹

- If current demographic trends will continue, the number of teenagers in the Russian Federation will already be smaller in 2001 than it was in 1959, the year in which the birth deficit from the World War II period cast the greatest shadow of the USSR. Such an outcome will also increase the competition for manpower between the Russian military and the Russian economy. It creates additional pressure (besides financial difficulties) for the military to maintain its current force structure and it becomes more difficult for the economy to recover from its present problems. These demographic trends will in particular in Siberia and the Russian Far East, raise numerous new security challenges (in particular vis-à-vis China). According to official Russian sources, every year up to 500,000 Chinese laborers are immigrating into the Russian Far East from northern provinces of China, and the greater part of these people do not return but stay in Russia. The number of foreign citizens who are illegally staying on Russian territory has already exceeded one million.²⁰ In the Future, Russia may be eventually confronted with serious Chinese demands that it has to open its vast and and scarcely populated Far Eastern provinces (eight million Russians live between Lake Baykal in Siberia and Vladivostok) to Chinese immigration. On the Chinese side, the density is already nowadays ten times higher than among the 32 million Russian population in the country east of the Ural Mountains and is increasing 20 times faster than the local population on the Russian side.²¹ Thus Russia may need the West and international organizations to cope with this key security challenge in the future.

Impacts of the Decentralization, Regionalization and Fragmentation within the Russian Federation

In the foreseeable future, it seems inevitable that Russia's power projection abroad beyond its territories will be reduced further. Internal economic and political decay as well as military decline might assume new security dimensions. That might (a) increase the legal and illegal exports of military hardware and software to a rising power like China or to 'rogue states' such as Iran and others; (b) further weaken controls over Russia's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, including missile and technology transfers (considering the financial crisis of 1998 with its troubling impacts on Russia's nuclear security system); and (c) revoke a new internal crisis with international repercussions.

Originally, the creeping devolution of power from the center to the periphery was a result of the unplanned decay of a hypercentralized state rather than the product of constitutional agreement. Because of the fact that such regional power is unprecedented in Russian history, the set of arrangements producing stability now may generate something else in the future. There is a very real danger that the

decentralization, fragmentation and regionalization processes underway will take hold to such an extent that the unitary federation is becoming increasingly fragmenting.

The risk is not that Russia will implode like the former Soviet Union, but rather cease to function because Russia lacks viable institutions of both regional and central government and will fall between varying vested interests of the political and economic elites in Moscow and the regions. At the same time, the division of powers between the center and the region is so vaguely defined that it produces ongoing battles of vested interests and thus a continuous political crisis.²²

During the last years, Russia's federal structure has been a major source of political friction, leverage and competition. The most contentious issue between the federal government and the regions is the division of power between them, especially over tax and budgetary issues. Such disputes have been resolved mostly on an ad hoc basis, with the federal government signing more than 40 separate treaties delimiting authority between it and single regions in spite of constitutional provisions and laws providing for a uniform regime applying to all. The federal government is largely unable to improve its legitimacy in the contest with regional governments without dramatic and sustained improvements in its revenue base and without effective redistribution of this revenue to national significant purposes.

In contrast to many politicians and experts in Moscow, regionalization can be seen as a normal part of the democratic evolution of Russia that dilutes the traditionally autocratic and hypercentralized power structure but some of Russia's constitutional arrangements and other circumstances are probably not conducive to a functioning liberal democracy. The democratization has – to some extent – inevitably produced 'little dictators' who have mis-ruled and often seized local power through non-democratic means. That, however, is explainable in a country with little tradition of a pluralistic democracy and a real federal structure. The great majority of Russia's political elite (particularly in Moscow) is seeing the decentralization and regionalization processes as a negative phenomenon which is often perceived equivalent to separatism. Hence they have paid more lipservice to regional autonomy rather than having accepted genuine federalism. Both the elite in Moscow as well as in the regions have almost no experience in creating a federalist state from below and not from the top. They largely do not see and understand the regionalization/decentralization as a chance to build a real and viable federalist/confederalist state from below.

Furthermore, they overlook the globalization trends in economic-political affairs which are strengthening those processes regardless what Russia is doing. Thus while in economic affairs, Russia is already on the way to a confederalist state, politically it is quite different. In this regard, there is another gap between traditional tendencies to maintain a strong unified, federal state and the economic trends of globalization

which are favoring a further decentralization and regionalization in the coming years and decades.

During the last decade, the Russian economy has become more and more fragmented, thereby undermining the effectiveness of policies designed for nationwide effect and imposing heavy burdens on the central government to develop highly differentiated regional policies. This is more than ever necessary because recent the socio-economic development has resulted in increasing differences between the regions. Each has quite different characteristics in terms of its political and economic profile. The increasing diversity of decisions by regional leaders will make it even more of a challenge for the central government to devise any single policy for the entire country in the future. Meanwhile, the diversity has often become even greater than their differences with Moscow. Accordingly, the impact of the Russian financial crisis has been felt in varying degrees throughout the Russian Federation.

But the economic crisis has prompted a further shift in decision-making away from the center and toward provinces. Hence some of Russia's 89 regions have announced various emergency plans to cope with the rapidly deteriorating situation in the absence of direction from the federal government. However, although the center-periphery relationship has been redefined by the regionalization processes underway, by the bitter inter-clan rivalries and governmental disarray and 'robber barons' to appropriate vast assets across Russia as a byproduct of the deepening crisis, most of the Russian regions have not really become economically and politically stronger. Although most of Russia's regions seem rather weak and are still dependent on Moscow, local power structures seem to be very strong when they are united and can count on local support.

Given the overall economic crisis and the inability of the central government to provide the regions with the means to survive, local governments have been forced to reorient their attention to more prosperous neighbors (particularly in the Russian Far East). Interestingly, it seems that ethnically Russian regions have been even more active and more successful than non-Russian ones in promoting ties with foreign countries. Unfortunately, these new developments have started very late. The Far Eastern region with its core maritime provinces, for instance, had for many years remained a closed zone, destined to be a military outpost fully dependent on Moscow for the supply of material resources, energy resources and all major daily necessities. In fact, no conditions for positive cooperation and exchange with neighboring countries in Asia had been established. During the last years and despite the enormous energy resources in the region, no significant domestic or foreign investment has been made due to the lack of a coherent legal framework with

transparent rules for domestic and foreign investment or joint ventures as well as to the widespread corruption, organized crime and other obstacles for foreign investments.²³ In 1997, foreign investment stood at just \$140 million – only three percent of the Russian total.²⁴ The economic gap between the Russian regions eastwards of the Urals with those regions in Northeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific region is rather widening which makes the integration of these regions into Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Pacific rim even more difficult.

At the same time, the organized and even sometimes institutionalized behind-the-scenes cooperation between Russian mafia, Japanese Yakuza and Chinese Triads is creating a potential security problem of regional dimensions. This interplay, however, is not only confined to East Asia but also has security implications for Europe too because the federal government is either powerless to combat organized crime or, more often, is linked to or even part of it. It is one of many other examples why the West must stop thinking only in terms of narrowly-defined dimensions of European security instead of at least Eurasian security. Indeed, Russia's size being nearly that of the former Soviet Union, it is an enormous landmass spanning ten time zones from its European territories to the Russian Far East.

At present, political groups will continue to be inflame tensions between regions and the federal government for their own purposes and this will aggravate political instability caused by other factors. Hence regionalization and decentralization have important consequences for the political and economic stability of Russia and for its prospects for returning to economic prosperity. In the light of the current war in Dagestan, former Prime Minister Primakov — in contrast to many Russian officials who followed President Boris Yeltsin — had already admitted in 1997 that separatism remains a serious issue and that Russia is far from united. He has argued repeatedly as foreign and Prime minister that Russian diplomacy's major tasks include the maintenance of that country's territorial integrity.²⁵ And Russia's 'National Security Concept', signed by President Yeltsin in December 1997, has stressed more than ever that Russia's main security challenge stems primarily from internal instability rather than from external security challenges (despite the Russian opposition of NATO's extension to the east).²⁶

However, separatism as an extreme form of decentralization and regionalization seems still primarily a concrete threat in the North Caucasus rather than in other Russian regions. Most of Russia's regions are still seeking greater autonomy within a larger Russian Federation rather than independence which leads, nonetheless, to greater competition than cooperation. In general, secessionist tendencies have stemmed not primarily from ethnic or historic roots, but rather from Moscow's failure

and inability to meet its obligations in the view of the regions. Against this background of an increasing diversity, Russia seems to move toward an increasing 'asymmetric federation' which will complicate the center-periphery relationship even further.

Whether widely discussed plans of advocating the consolidation of Russia's 89 regions into 10, 12 or 25 to 35 bigger regional administrations might really be an adequate instrument to stop the fragmentation and disintegration trends remains uncertain as long as Moscow is not addressing the real origins for these strategic processes and as long as it is favoring strong top-down control over the regions.

Russia's present military invasion in Chechnya, for instance, that seems to follow no mid- and long-term political design for a political and economic stabilization of the North Caucasus, might rather backfire and so fuel an extreme 'Islamization' which Moscow has claimed to prevent. In this light, it might rather hasten the processes fragmentation and disintegration processes under way.

The Future of Russia's Military Reform Policies – The 'Wounded Bear' and the Nuclear Illusion

Over the past eight years, the Russian armed forces has experienced continual financial crisis and steep decline as Russia's defeat in Chechnya in 1996 has brutally revealed. Since 1989 Russian experts have discussed genuine military reform. So far, however, only some modest military reform steps have been made, albeit Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeyev has achieved some success during the last three years.²⁷ Mostly, however, the Defense Ministry and in particular the Russian General Staff has downgraded a real 'military reform' to a 'reform of the armed forces' – these are not the same.²⁸ Moreover, considerable disagreements exist about the future direction and concrete steps of Russia's military reform between Defence Minister Sergeev and the Chief of the General Staff, General Anatoly Kvashnin.²⁹ As long as Russia's economic decay continues, Russia's armed forces are largely unable to play a powerful and lasting role in its foreign and security policies. Even the Ministry's own, most optimistic projections, only see it beginning to receive adequate funding in 2004.

After the financial crisis broke out in August 1998, even those calculations are no longer realistic. The virtual collapse of Russian state finances since that time has made any effective military reform even more doubtful. In the second quarter of 1999, the underfinancing of the armed forces meant they received 200 million rubles under their quota. In the fourth quarter of 1999, only 31 per cent of the military budget had been confirmed in the summer of that year.³⁰ At the same time, total debts to the

Army and Navy have reached the sum of 50 billion, almost half of the entire annual defense budget.³¹ As the result of the domestic uncertainties, for the first time since 1991, details of the 1999 defence budget were classified again.³² Moreover, Russia's defense budget was also in the last years never as transparent as the defense budgets of NATO member states. The 1998 defense budget, for instance, still excludes the financial resources spent on Russia's 15 so-called 'other armed forces'. According to Aleksey Arbatov, total funding of these often heavy armed paramilitary forces amounted in 1997 to some \$8 billion with a total strength of 1.2 million men.³³ Furthermore, as a Russian source criticized, Russia continues to afford the 'luxury of maintaining a total contingent of over 25,000 servicemen abroad. Even the USSR could not afford this!'³⁴

The failing transparency also contradicts Western obligations of international credits given to Russia. Furthermore, new credits by the IMF are also uncertain because Russia might have misused previous loans in order to increase its defense budget to finance the war in Chechnya. At the same time, Russia has ambitious rearmament plans as the report of the General Staff at Russia's Defense Ministry, entitled 'Prognosis for Financial and Economic Support of Military Construction until 2010',³⁵ from early 1999 (before the outbreak of the Kosovo war) has indicated. If the Russian government confirms this blueprint, military expenditures would rise from 2.6 per cent of Russia's GDP to between 6.0 and 6.5 per cent by 2005.³⁶ Moreover, funds allocated for the rearmament program and scientific as well as experimental design work then would consume about two-thirds of the entire defense budget from 2001 to 2004 followed by a decline to about two-fifths of the defense spending until 2010.³⁷ The U.S. expert Richard F. Staar has already warned:

... the bottom line of the Kremlin's wish list is this: it cannot attain or even approach its ambitious objectives without spending billions it does not and will not possess *unless it receives funds of that magnitude from international sources*. In other words, the Russian state can afford to pour investment into weapons research only insofar as its civilian expenditures are covered by monies provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or friendly foreign governments.³⁸

While the official overall strength has been reduced to 1.2 million by January 1, 1999, and is due to fall further, today only about one-third or even one-fourth of that strength can be considered genuinely operational. Without the political will to make drastic cuts, Moscow will instead maintain a largely non-operational military machine that will further deepen the severe structural weaknesses of the Russian armed forces dating back to Soviet times.³⁹ Given the available budget, a further reduction of the regular armed forces to some 600,000 will be necessary at the beginning of

the next decade.⁴⁰ Although the adopted common policy guidelines on military issues of the 'National Security Concept' of December 1997 stated that, even if all of Russia armed forces (including those not belonging to the Defense Ministry) are mobilized, Russia can cope with at best just one regional conflict. And even that scenario has become more and more doubtful during the last two years.

Unless funding increases, only 40-50 per cent of Russia's Air Forces fleet will still be operational by 2001, according to a military source.⁴¹ Already today, every second aircraft and 40 per cent of anti-aircraft systems and helicopters need repairs.⁴² Mainly due to the lack of fuel, flight training in Russia's Air Force has been fulfilled by only 35 per cent in 1999, while during the same period of 1998 it had been fulfilled by 45 per cent.⁴³

In the summer of 1999, only three divisions and four brigades in the Leningrad, Moscow, North Caucasus and Siberian military districts have maintained a status of 'permanent readiness units' with a least 80 percent of full personnel strength and with 100 per cent of weaponry and other equipment. Nonetheless, major military exercises (such as 'Zapad-99') in June 1999 demonstrated - to some extent surprisingly - a much better capability to deploy large combined armed forces than many Western experts expected.⁴⁴ However, as the present renewed war in Chechnya has confirmed, Russia's conventional military capabilities are becoming increasingly overstrained as the result of its lack of trained professional troops and of resources for training, maintenance and new equipment.

The system for calling up conscripts has also become more and more obscure because of the compulsory military service and exemptions on the grounds of conscientious objection, deserters, and 'dedovshina' (the systematic oppression of young recruits by their older comrades). Meanwhile, in the light of the war in Dagestan/Chechnya and reports that the military is even illegally using inexperienced conscripts to fight the rebels, Tartastan has declared it will no longer send its conscripts to fight for Russia in the southern regions or any other 'hotspots' because they have not received the military training for those combat missions.⁴⁵ The Defense Ministry felt be forced ultimately to compromise with the province's decision because it worried that other regions will follow Tartastan's example. According to Russian law until the end of 1998, conscripts could be used in armed conflicts only on a voluntary basis.⁴⁶ But already in December 1998, and in contrast to the original plans to create professional armed forces, President Yeltsin had been forced to sign a decree that also allows to use conscripts for armed conflict situations and peacekeeping as well as peacemaking operations because of the lack of soldiers for those missions. At the end, Tartastan agreed with the Defense Ministry that all young conscripts from Tartastan who have served less than six months in the army will have to return from

the new 'hotspot'.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, as the realities of the new Chechen war reveal once again, Russia's conscripts are mostly neither well-trained nor have the moral for fighting those ethnic wars at Russia's southern periphery - particularly the longer the war will endure and the more soldiers will die.

The latest statistics reveal that the health crisis and drug problems have also increasingly affected the armed forces.⁴⁸ Reportedly, the number of healthy conscripts has fallen by 20 percent over the last decade. Nearly 33 percent of all conscripts are being either exempted or 'reprieved' (for health reasons) by Russian draft boards during the spring-summer call-up campaign of 1999. An increasing number of prospective conscripts suffer from numerous diseases and drug addiction which has soared by 100 per cent since 1993. In 1999 alone, the number of crimes connected with illegal drug trafficking committed by servicemen increased by 32 per cent. In the Chelyabinsk region alone, a rise of over 300 per cent since the mid-1990s had been reported.⁴⁹

Incidents of bribery have increased by almost 40 per cent, though crime rates in total have fallen by 12.4 per cent compared with the summer period of 1998.⁵⁰ At the same time, at the beginning of 1999, 93,400 servicemen lacked still apartments for their families. In April 1999, the federal government owed nearly 7.5 billion roubles to Russia's armed forces personnel.⁵¹ Furthermore, the socio-economic crisis of the armed forces has resulted in a growing *de facto* alliance between local military commanders and regional political bosses – a fact which has opened the door to patronage, widespread corruption and weapon smuggling. On the other hand, it is also an obstacle to any possible attempt for a *coup d'état* of the military elite or the creation of an effective centralized dictatorship covering the whole country.

Russia's foremost security perception and the resulting commitment to prepare forces able to fight low-intensity conflicts at home (especially at its southern flank) has been replaced, meanwhile, by a continued determination to maintain a modern nuclear capability. This serves Russia's status as a nuclear world power (i.e. in the UN-Security Council) as well as deterrence functions vis-à-vis superior conventional armed forces of NATO in Europe and China in East Asia. Hence, Russia's nuclear forces have received preferential treatment, especially the Strategic Missile Forces (RVSN). According to Russian data, up to 90 per cent of all military expenditures of the defense budget were spent on strategic weapons branches, primarily the RVSN, which Marshal Igor Sergeev commanded before he became Defense Minister.⁵² Russia's nuclear forces are now in process of reorganization under a single command – which, however, is very much disputed in the armed forces themselves (General Staff, ground forces etc.).⁵³

Many military arguments are at first glance understandable – particularly in the light of Russia's financial constraints. However, the received preferential treatment of the newly established 'Strategic Deterrence Forces' and its unified supreme command has provoked new controversies and debates about the scarce resources to build new nuclear missiles ('Topol-M') instead of modernizing the conventional armed forces. Russia has already dropped its 1982 pledge 'no-first use'-policy of nuclear weapons in the document 'Principle Guidance on the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation' in November 1993. It has underlined the increasing role of Russia's strategic and tactical nuclear weapons in its defense policies.⁵⁴ Many Russian security and defense experts advocate placing a greater reliance on nuclear weapons to compensate for the deficiencies of conventional forces. Not only strategic nuclear weapons, but also tactical nuclear weapons play a much more important role today in Russia's defense posture, and particularly in the Far East for contingency scenarios against China.

Moreover, Russian nuclear weapons designers, confronted with the fact that their country can no longer afford such a vast nuclear weapon arsenal as in Soviet times, are lobbying presently together with General Staff officers to build a new generation of low-yield tactical nuclear weapons for use on a battlefield, which could be Moscow's answer to its lack of high-precision conventional weapon systems.⁵⁵ But given Russia's economic and financial constraints, a further modernization of its Strategic Nuclear Forces and tactical nuclear arsenal would deepen the underlying problem that it would come at the further expense of conventional forces. It would result in a continued degradation of morale and operational effectiveness when Russia will have to cope with a lasting extremely violent ethnic conflict in the Northern Caucasus – a conflict with no peaceful solution in sight.

The new emphasis on the role of nuclear weapons has also been confirmed in Russia's 'National Security Concept' of 1997 and in new military doctrine and strategy proposals.⁵⁶ It suggests an overwhelming reliance on nuclear forces of a host of military-political contingencies (including the right to use them as first strike and sometimes even for the pre-emptive use in ethno-political conflicts) that these forces cannot realistically and effectively confront.⁵⁷ In October 1999, the draft of Russia's new military doctrine - which has been discussed for more than three years and prepared in late 1998 - was published. The doctrine as 'a systemized aggregate of fundamental official views concentrated in a single document, on preventing wars and armed conflicts, on their nature and methods of waging them, and on organizing the activities of the state, society and citizens to ensure military security of the Russian Federation (RF) and its allies'⁵⁸ has been prepared by the Center for Strategic Research of the General Staff and includes the considerations of all 'power

ministries in Russia. It is presently going to the Security Council for approval, after it will be signed into official existence by the President himself. The draft military doctrine also confirms the further nuclearization of Russia's defense policies by pointing out:

The Russian Federation retains itself the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction against it and its allies, *and in response to wide-scale aggression using conventional weapons in situations critical to the national security of the Russian Federation and its allies.*⁵⁹

This formulation leaves much room for interpretation, particularly in crisis situations of local conflicts which have the potential for rapid escalation. Section 2.4 and 2.5 of the draft military doctrine must therefore be read in context:

A world war can result from an escalation of an armed conflict or of a local or regional war A conventional world war will be characterized by a high probability of escalating into a nuclear war with the inevitable mass victims and destruction and with disastrous consequences for civilization and for the foundations of mankind's vital activities and existence. ...

*... A regional war can be waged with the participation of two or more states (groups of states) of a region by national or coalition armed forces using both conventional as well as nuclear weapons. A regional war can result from an escalation of a local war or armed conflict or it may be preceded by a period of threat.*⁶⁰

It confirms the lowering of the nuclear threshold onto the level of local wars and armed conflicts such as ethnic conflicts in which the use of tactical nuclear weapons are, at least theoretically, no longer excluded.

Furthermore, Russia urgently needs its limited procurement budget for concentrating on critical systems and upgrades of the C³I structure. Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces are becoming more and more blind as aging surveillance satellites and radar system need replacement. With a decaying early warning system, the danger of false alarms is growing during a time, when Russia's gripped Strategic Nuclear Forces remain poised on hairtrigger alert, ready to fire at a moment's notice (launch-on-warning).⁶¹ Russia relies more than ever on using its strategic nuclear weapon systems first or launching them on warning of hostile missile attack. As Bruce Blair has repeatedly argued: Russia's 'growing reliance [on nuclear weapons] has not only

lowered the nuclear threshold for intentional use but also increased the danger of mistaken or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.⁶²

That was already the case in January 1995 when a Norwegian weather rocket started and inadvertently alarmed Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces. For the very first time since the Cold War, it triggered a heightened level of alert throughout its nuclear forces, including for the activation of the nuclear briefcase by President Boris Yeltsin.⁶³ The Russian Defense Ministry hopes now with another draft law on the problems of the space complex, entitled 'On Funding the Strategic Nuclear Forces of the Russian Federation until 2010', to improve its space missile defense capabilities (including early warning means). By 2010, the military plans to have restored the combat potential of its Strategic Nuclear Forces.⁶⁴

Characteristically for the increasing role of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons - which mostly (with as much as 6.000 operational warheads plus thousands in storage) have not been destroyed as former President Mikhail Gorbachev had pledged in October 1991 and Boris Yeltsin had confirmed in 1992 - in Russia's military planning is also the fact that the current restructuring of Russia's armed forces is conducted under the slogan 'military reform under the nuclear missile umbrella'.⁶⁵ In this light, Russia places too much emphasis on nuclear scenarios (which are mostly unrealistic and do not solve any of its most important security problems at its southern flank) in order to justify its declining world power status without having the means to control them effectively.⁶⁶

As the Dagestan war as Russia's worst security crisis since the ill-fated 1994-96 war against Chechen rebels, demonstrates once again, its main security challenge has much more to do with low-intensity conflicts than with a 'virtual NATO threat' or a nuclear preemptive strike of the US strategic nuclear forces. Neither strategic nor tactical nuclear weapons will help Russia to deter and fight low-intensity conflicts. Thus Russia may have a credible nuclear deterrent but it is increasingly becoming vulnerable to attack by well-trained guerrilla armies such as in the North Caucasus.⁶⁷

But newly discussed plans to develop a new generation of nuclear munitions with low-yield and super-low-yield, obviously delivered to targets by both strategic and tactical delivery systems (such as the newly developed Iskander 400km short-range missile system), the nuclear part of the pompous Zapad-99 exercise in the 'Western Theater of Operations' in June 1999 (the biggest and most costly exercise since 1985! and directed against a NATO-aggression 'preceded by a powerful information warfare' in North and Central Europe⁶⁸) as well as the seriously debated use of nuclear (and chemical) weapons in the current war in Dagestan/Chechnya seem all to confirm that Moscow priorities tend rather toward a further 'nuclearization of

Russia's defence policy'.⁶⁹ As Russian defense experts have discussed, it could be the Russian answer to its lack of high-precision non-nuclear weapon systems (used by NATO during the Kosovo-war), which are defined by Russian defense experts as 'strategic deterrence weapons' and the new 'God of War'.⁷⁰ But whether these new nuclear weapons can really be used effectively and justified politically in any low-intensity conflicts is more than doubtful. These non-nuclear strategic weapons systems might have some militarily positive deterrent effects, but they have also many negative implications, in particular if one takes into account the increasing asymmetrical conventional military balance for Russia:

Within the context of deterrence of major non-nuclear aggression using nuclear weapons (in the presence of an asymmetry of conventional forces): the threshold of nuclear weapon use is determined by the level of potential of conventional forces with respect to enemy potential, and so a high asymmetry of conventional forces lowers the threshold of nuclear weapons use and elevates the danger of use of nuclear weapons even in low-level conflicts.⁷¹

While President Boris Yeltsin chaired a 'super secret session' of the Kremlin Security Council in April 1999 that discussed this issue, so far nothing has been made public. The Security Council, however, had already approved in July 1998 the structure of Russia's nuclear deterrence forces until 2010. In December 1998, finally, new major provisions of Russia's nuclear deterrence policy had been adopted. The concept has been called 'Main Policy Guidelines of the Russian Federation in the Area of Nuclear Deterrence' and has been set forth on 15 March 1999 by Deputy Secretary of the Security Council Viktor Mikhailov.⁷² But the concept itself has not yet been published anywhere. Nonetheless, it became clear what has been discussed in general. As Alexander Golts lamented, the West knew 'that Moscow is not going to push the nuclear button because of Yugoslavia'. Therefore, the session in April 1999 was dedicated to the discussion of non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons because 'the threat of a global nuclear catastrophe failed to impress NATO, but the specter of a limited [nuclear] war may just do the trick'.⁷³

Moreover, regardless of the Duma's ratification of START-II in the forthcoming months, a decade from now Russia probably will have less than 1,500 warheads in its strategic nuclear arsenal as the result of the economic situation and its scarce financial resources.⁷⁴ Even the core of its strategic nuclear deterrence forces, the RSVN, will shrink dramatically in the years ahead. At the same time, however, thousands of strategic and tactical nuclear warheads are still waiting in storage for their dismantling. Presently, Russia has neither the financial resources to maintain a nuclear arsenal equivalent to that of the United States nor sufficient funds for

dismantling all the nuclear warheads of the Cold War. Even the ratified START-I agreement has only 40 per cent been funded by Russia's federal budget while the present restricted modernization efforts of its nuclear forces will take up already 28 per cent of the defense budget.⁷⁵

Moreover, other important tasks such as improving reliability and safe nuclear weapon use or Russia's missile early-warning capabilities (which are in a poor state and only capable of maintaining coverage for 21 hours a day) have not received the much needed attention.⁷⁶ In this regard, the creation of joint missile-attack reciprocal notification and warning centers in Russia and the U.S., as it has already been agreed, is of utmost importance for the survival of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces rather than being merely downgraded to just a Confidence and Security Building Measure (CSBM).

Russia's refusal to ratify START-II is in the light of the financial implications of the treaty for its future Strategic Nuclear Forces to some extent understandable. Yet ratification is ultimately necessary for its entire armed forces: politically important for a reliable security-policy in the future, economically as a cornerstone for the future budget planning as a pre-condition for any military reforms, and militarily important simply to the fact that Russia needs START-II more than the US does. The expiration date for Russia's strategic missile arsenal will have been reached by 2007-2008, while it will be for the US only in 2020-2025. According to Russian sources, in 2008-2010, the US maximum number of warheads might be four to six times greater than Russia's (which will have great difficulties sustaining even 1,000 strategic nuclear warheads) while the combined nuclear potential of France and Great Britain may exceed Russia by 2010-2015.⁷⁷ That explains Russia's interest in reducing the strategic nuclear arsenal of each side in forthcoming START- III negotiations even further to 1,000 or 1,500 warheads than the US side is proposing (2,000-2,500 warheads). Nonetheless, Russia's refusal to ratify START-II during the last few years is also another indicator of Russia's traditional superpower mentality, which remains deeply rooted and entrenched as part of the 'patriotic consensus' especially in the communist and nationalistic circles in the Duma.

Is The Cold War Over? - Implications of Russia's Foreign and Security Policies

Even today, there is no single view on how Russia's foreign policy is shaped, how it relates to the interests of some or other groups and lobbies associated with certain sectors of the economy, productions or financial structures. In the meantime, many things suggest that such groups – usually called 'economic groups' – play a considerable role in shaping some important Russian foreign policy directives.

(The Russian foreign policy expert Iu. Fedorov at the end of 1998⁷⁸)

With the end of the Cold War, Russia has often drifted back to forms of militarism, assertive nationalism and suspicion of the West. Historically, those tendencies are hardly surprising. Throughout the history of the modern world, a prolonged transformation of a political and economic structures with decaying institutions and regime changes has often caused domestic instability, leading even to international conflicts and wars. While old institutions have collapsed, new and democratic institutions have yet to be consolidated in Russia. Moreover, Russia's historical ambivalence toward the West and Europe as well as its latent inclination to seek its own Slavophilic 'third way' are deeply rooted in her political culture. In this regard, it can even be argued that Russia's transformation and dramatic regime changes after the demise of the Soviet Union and the *coup d'état* in August 1991 has been relatively peaceful.⁷⁹

At the same time, the decentralization and regionalization processes have produced new actors in Russia's foreign policy. Besides economic interest groups (such as the Military-Industrial Complex or Russia's oil and gas industry – *Gazprom* has often been characterized in Russia as a 'state within a state'⁸⁰ while Boris Berezovsky claimed at the end of 1996 that he and six other people controlled 50 per cent of Russia's gross national product⁸¹), Russia's regions have also become increasingly involved in foreign policy activities.⁸² In contrast to Soviet foreign policy, Russia's federal government has to take into account various regional interests in a way that the FSU never did. It is, inter alia, explained by the fact that since 1991, the administrative boundaries of 27 of Soviet Russia's regions became international frontiers of the Russian Federation. These non-traditional foreign policy actors have complicated foreign policies shaped and designed by the Foreign Ministry, the Duma and the Yeltsin administration. Furthermore, the leading political forces and groups (or 'clans') in Russia often use foreign policy and international problems or conflicts to consolidate their own position in domestic politics (as Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is demonstrating again with his 'understanding' of being able to solve the conflict in Chechnya) rather than to address those foreign policy problems themselves in order to solve them.

Russia has still not developed a system of rules by which these political conflicts can be conducted. Everyone seems to play his own game with no definite rules existing for the game. In this regard, these domestic circumstances and processes often reflect a 'pluralist chaos' by a multiplicity of actors (representing a multitude of specific interests) in Russia's foreign policy decision-making. By lacking mechanisms

to coordinate and control different foreign policy agendas, an implementation of coherent long-term foreign-policy strategies (indeed, often parallel foreign policies can be identified in various regions) has been prevented and is de facto often impossible. As the result, a succession of ill-connected *ad hoc* responses to issues as particular elements and vested interests in the elite see their influence ascendant or their interests engaged is a more typical of the present Russian foreign and security policy than any mid- and long-term proactive 'masterminded' strategies.

Equally, a de-institutionalization of Russia's security policy decision-making can be identified as, *inter alia*, Russia's dangerous advance force into Pristina in June 1998 has revealed. All formal bodies and procedures, most notably the role of Russia's Security Council, were ignored. Russia's defense ministry and General Staff seemed to have presented a '*fait accompli*' not only towards NATO, but also to the Russian president who declared only afterwards to have ordered that advance (though he might have given a verbal consent but without a deeper analysis of the implications). At the same time, however, the influence of Russia's military in its foreign and security policies has been diminished since 1995/1996⁸³, albeit recent events such as the military's insistence on finishing the war in Chechnya by military means instead of seeking a political solution, indicate rather a contrary trend.⁸⁴ This second Chechen war also highlights numerous deficiencies in the political control of the armed forces and in the nature of the civil-military relationship. Russia's generals are not only responsible for designing the military strategy in the Chechen war, but seem presently even to determine the political strategy and goals of the military operations. Moreover, many generals seem to be personally inclined to launch an all-out war, out of revenge for losing the first Chechen war and the failed *coup d'état* for preserving the FSU, though the budget can neither support a long-term military operation nor maintaining an effective cordon sanitary. Russia also seems also to have forgotten the historical military lesson that seizing a 'security zone' is far easier than holding it.

Nonetheless, due to the long-term strategic trends and Russia's economic disarray, Russia's influence in the 'near abroad' (CIS) is constantly declining⁸⁵ as Uzbekistan's withdrawal from the CIS Collective Security *Treaty* and rejection of coordination of military activities with Russia indicats. The pro-Western GUUAM alignment (between Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Moldova), which has grown from an economic alliance to include security cooperation, is another proof of that assumption. In the view of many Russian politicians, it is intended to sabotage Russia's influence in the CIS from within.⁸⁶

Without the support and cooperation of Georgia and Azerbaijan, however, Russia cannot regain lasting control of the northern Caucasus or even the southern Caucasus. But both states have, meanwhile, made clear their intention to 'knock

loudly on NATO's door' within five years (though this is rather unrealistic).⁸⁷ Moreover, Georgia is unwilling to maintain Russian military bases on its soil any longer, while the forced withdrawal of Russian border guards from Georgia is already underway. Azerbaijan is asking for NATO bases on its territory.⁸⁸ The Baku-Supsa pipeline from Azerbaijan to the Black Sea Coast, as well as the Baku-Ceyhan oil-pipeline through Georgia to Turkey agreed at the OSCE summit in November 1999 bypassing Russia, have enormous economic and geopolitical implications.⁸⁹ It undermines Russia's pipeline monopoly in the region and allows these countries to get out of Russia's orbit and control.

Against this background, Russia's present warfare in Chechnya and Dagestan is also conducted to defend the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline as the main export route for large volumes of Caspian oil. The prospects for regaining its influence in the region or the 'lost southern empire', however, are rather low. Even if Russia succeeds militarily in Chechnya, the result might be rather the de-stabilization of the entire Caucasus in the short- and mid-term future. Any future oil pipeline to bypass Chechnya through Dagestan will automatically become a target for Chechen separatists, who will have now nothing to lose after Russia's war against their population and the destruction of their homes and the civilian infrastructure. Hence any foreign investment in these pipelines to bypass Chechnya through Dagestan will be at highest risk, making it ultimately less likely or even impossible.

Russia shoots itself in its own foot by seeking a military solution in Dagestan and Chechnya instead of a vigorous and comprehensive effort to engage the moderate political forces in a dialogue as well as by denying to respect or at least taking into account the independence and security concerns of neighboring states (such as Georgia and Azerbaijan). Furthermore, Russia's desire to boost the OSCE as the main institution in the European security architecture has no credibility whatsoever in the future by excluding once again any OSCE observers from or even a OSCE mission for the war in Chechnya (as Moscow has already done it during the first Chechen war between 1994-96).

Although the tendencies of an adventurist and militaristic foreign policy can easily be identified, Russia does not have the capabilities or the resources for any ambitious long-term foreign and security policies. As the end of the Kosovo War demonstrated, NATO and Russia can continue to work pragmatically together in shared pursuit of common interests despite initial misunderstandings and misgivings, though Russia felt be downgraded 'to be just a courier' between NATO and Belgrad.⁹⁰ Russia made a substantial contribution to Milosevic's decision to end the conflict with NATO. However, Russia's policy during the Kosovo of supporting the Milosevic, regime as

virtually the only major country to do so, has also revealed its continuing 'soul searching' and identity crisis as Dominique Moisi has pointedly noted:

For Russia, the Kosovo crisis presents both a mirror and a dilemma. It reflects Russia's downgraded international status. If they want to be Europeans, Russians have to accept and openly share the values of 'their' continent. Europe is a place where ethnic cleansing cannot be executed or expelled for what they are and not for what they did. In expressing themselves on Kosovo issues, and in taking sides, Russians are also choosing their identity.⁹¹

Russia's domestic reaction, with conspiracy theories abounding, highlighted the growing sense of frustration, impotence and irrelevance as Moskau was perceived as sidelined on the international stage and in Europe by the sole remaining superpower. Against this background, it is not surprising that an increasing number of Western experts identify not only a growing gap between common interests but also an increasing gap shared values with Russia. This trend complicate even more a future common policy between the West and Russia. On the other hand, Russia has now shifted its primary focus from internal stability factors in the December 1997 National Security Concept⁹² anew to 'external threats to Russia', as outlined in the new draft military doctrine, including, *inter alia*:

- territorial claims on the Russian Federation (RF);
- intervention in internal affairs of the Russian Federation;
- attempts to ignore (or infringe on) RF interests in resolving international security problems and to oppose strengthening [of the RF] as one of the influential centers of a multipolar world;
- centers of armed conflicts, above all near the borders of the RF and its allies,
- the creation (buildup) of groupings of troops (forces) leading to a disturbance of the existing balance of forces near borders of the RF and of its allies and in seas adjoining their territory;
- expansion of military blocks and alliances to the detriment of military security of the RF and its allies;
- introduction of foreign troops (without UN Security Council Sanction) to the territory of contiguous states friendly with the RF. ...⁹³

Furthermore, despite eight years of independent statehood, Russia has not come to terms with the end of the Soviet superpower by defining a new role and identity for itself on the world stage. It is often geared and sometimes even been obsessed towards denying the USA the 'monopolar' hegemony Moscow suspects it of seeking.

Therefore it favors a 'multipolar world' by establishing a 'virtual' 'strategic partnership' between Moscow, Beijing, India and others.⁹⁴ Russia's new strategy is intended to play off Western and 'Asian' interests in order to increase Russia's influence on the world stage. However, Primakov's 'Eurasian orientation' and the proclaimed 'strategic partnership' between Russia and China, initiated in April 1996, is in many respects rather a 'tactical alliance' (instead of a real military alliance which is not in the Chinese interest).⁹⁵

The current Sino-Russian trade figures and the prospects for increasing the bilateral trade to \$20 billion by the year 2000 (as had been agreed in 1996) are rather poor. The total bilateral trade in 1996 was \$6.77 billion and it declined to just \$5.5 billion in 1998. China's bilateral trade with the US by contrast, is worth ten times that with Russia. In several years of the 1990s, one-third of the total bilateral trade between Russia and China was related to the Russia export of high-tech weapon systems and transfers of military and dual-use technologies. In total between 1991 and 1997, China spent almost \$6 billion on Russian weapons.⁹⁶ Given the strategic economic, political and demographic trends, a Japanese diplomat has concluded and forecasted in 1997: 'China has a superior position to Russia in the region both politically and economically, and Russia must accept a junior partnership with China – a potential source of frustration for Moscow, especially given the nationalistic domestic atmosphere.'⁹⁷

In contrast to East Asia and the Russian Far East as well as to the 'soft underbelly' of its southern borders, the Euro-Atlantic area is the most structured, regulated, and therewith the most stable region of which Russia is an important integral part of it. Nowhere else is the danger of interstate conflicts so low; and nowhere else is Russia directly participating in numerous security agreements and obligations with its neighboring countries: Russia is a member of NACC, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, a signatory of arms control agreements such as INF, START and CFE and since 1997 a member of the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council.

Moreover, the EU is Russia's most important modernization partner. While Russia's foreign trade with the CIS states declined from 55 per cent in 1991 to 22 per cent in 1998, it has risen to 40 per cent with the EU (after the inclusion of Central and East European countries it will even increase to 50 per cent in contrast to 6 per cent with China, 4 per cent with USA and 3 per cent with Japan).⁹⁸ However, Russia has never really recognized the economic and in particular the political potential of the EU. Moreover, Russia's EU policy is characterized by many contradictions. Thus it has also overlooked and underestimated the EU processes underway to create a common foreign and security policy (CFSP). In this light, Russia has neither

recognized its real own national interests nor the fact that 'its relations with China are not a substitute for, or a counterbalance to, relations with the West.'⁹⁹

Instead, Moscow has focused almost exclusively on NATO in regard to foreign and security policies and has never really understood the crucial role of the European member states play within the Western alliance. In Moscow's perception, NATO was always downgraded to be just to an instrument of US hegemonic policies which have been made responsible for almost everything. Not only in the light of NATO's extension to the east (consider the collapse of NATO's cooperation programs with Russia in the summer-autumn of 1992), Russia seems unwilling and unlikely to find NATO to be the solution to its security challenges – unless Russian politics undergoes a fundamental transition as the current draft of Russia's military doctrine is revealing once again. On the other hand, Russian liberals and economic interest groups that have benefited from Western integration had not allowed NATO extension to the east to undermine Russian relations with the West more seriously.

Nonetheless, as it looks now, and even after the resumption of the work of the NATO-Russian Permanent Joint Council, significant elements within Russia will continue to fear and distrust NATO and to perceive it as a source of potential threat in the future.¹⁰⁰ In the Russian view, a strong NATO means the combined political, military and economic power of the EU and the US near to Russia's border 'with a well developed military infrastructure which can be successfully used as a lever for exerting political pressure on Russia or its allies.'¹⁰¹ Those fears could already been identified before NATO's humanitarian intervention in Kosovo.¹⁰² In this regard, Russia's political elite has not accepted NATO's extension to the east as a *fait accompli*. The refusal of an invitation by Russia's chief of the General Staff, General Anatoly Kvashnin, to attend a semi-annual meeting at NATO headquarters of the chiefs of staff of the alliance and partner states in November 1999 is another example for the fact that the Russians 'are simply not interested at this time' in resuming a dialogue aimed at bringing Russia into the 'European security family.'¹⁰³

Moreover, through the prism of zero-sum games and conspiracy theories, NATO's cooperative PfP-programs with the newly independent states in the Caucasus and Central Asia are perceived in Russia as meddling in particular of the US and Turkey into the traditional Russian sphere of influence, aimed 'at bypassing Russia and weaken her position in the region'.¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, Russia has heavily criticized NATO's 'humanitarian intervention' in Kosovo and the new strategic concept of the Washington summit:

... it was for the first time that NATO officially abandoned its purely defensive strategy by declaring its right to wage military operations outside

its traditional responsibility zone. It stated that under certain conditions it would not even seek the UN Security Council's sanction. ...

The developments in Kosovo have demonstrated how this will be applied in practice: a group of states will use force at their own will and without limitations to destroy the economic potentials and cultural values of any country. ...

A group of states headed by the 'center of force' that claims the role of the only world leader has appropriated the right to pass judgement and interfere into domestic affairs. This is what NATO-centrism looks like. It seems that it is expected to resolve all crisis by force.¹⁰⁵

In contrast to those anti-NATO centrism, it seems at least for NATO's PFP-program that the opponents were originally not against the program itself but rather against Russia being treated equally with the other East European states. In their opinion, the West had not recognized the future special role and political weight of Russia in the future. But the Western and Russian approaches for European security architecture and the special roles of the existing security institutions such as NATO, OSCE, WEU and EU within this architecture have often been fundamentally different. That was partly the reason why NATO could not elaborate a well-functioning PFP-program with Russia until 1997.

Finally, after the war in Kosovo begun, Russia suspended all of its political-military contacts with NATO on 24 March 1999 in protest against NATO's military intervention. The Kosovo War has been associated not so much with Russia's specific regional as with her wider general interests such as Russia itself (aptly described as 'Serbia today, Russia tomorrow') and Moscow's special role in the CIS.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, according to Vladimir Baranovskij, the Russian response 'was caused by the contradictory, unstable and poorly structuralized nature of the process through which Russia's national interests are being formed.'¹⁰⁷ It has also been overlooked by many Western observers that Russia's non-Slavic ethnic groups and the non-Orthodox regions, such as Tartastan, Bashkortostan, Ingushetia and some other North Caucasian regions, were very critical towards the official Russian foreign policy and its open support of Serbia. In contrast to Moscow, they 'clearly showed where they stood' (rather on the side of the ethnic Albanians).¹⁰⁸

The following extremely dangerous and, ultimately, shortsighted military advance of 2000 Russian paratroopers, accompanied by a sudden upsurge of national pride in Russia, to the airport at Pristina in Kosovo after the peace agreement was announced is only one of the examples of destabilizing actions that have strained NATO-Russian relations during the last years. As a critical Russian source

summarized: '...by acting so resolutely and brusquely Russia cut off its own retreat. ... The upshot of it all is that Moscow will now have to pay its own bills'. It will cost about \$65 million.¹⁰⁹ The Russian commentator Andrei Grachev added cynically:

Although we are not yet about to wash our boots in the Indian Ocean and are only covering them with dust in the hills of Kosovo, the feeling is a pleasant one all the same. How pleasant it is to be back in good company, a community of great powers – a kind of new Holy Alliance of peace-keepers!¹¹⁰

Besides different approaches, political concepts and strategic trends, the Western side has also been confronted with another important challenge to its foreign policies vis-à-vis Russia: its policy of influencing Russia (namely strengthening democracy, pluralism and market economies) was often to a considerable extent counterproductive. In Russia, it has been perceived and criticized as an 'outside intervention' with Western advisers as the key decision-makers in its own policy apparatus, thus deciding Russia's future. Consequently, even the more or less pro-Western Yeltsin-regime had increasingly to avoid too close relations with the West for fear that it could damage its 'self-governing' image. No future Russian government could accept policies which would run opposite of this important Russian image. In this regard, the sometimes very open support by Western politicians for Russian President Yeltsin has also been counterproductive and short-sighted.

Against this domestic background, it became increasingly difficult to find political cooperation partners in Russia. The very practical cooperation programs within the framework of NATO's Cooperation Council (established in December 1991) and the PfP-program (1994) have been perceived by the Russian General Staff and the Defense Ministry as a direct threat to the political cohesion of its officer corps. An example: while already in December 1991 the West has offered Russia the possibility to educate, socialize and train younger military officers at Western military academies and universities the Russian top brass has perceived that as a ostensible contamination of their future officer corps with Western ideas. In reducing its armed forces in 1992, Russia's Defense Ministry used that opportunity to close the ranks in domestic, foreign and security policies by dismissing and forcing to retire all 'radical military reformers'. Many younger officers who were at the very beginning eager to go to the West became more and more unwilling because they have seen their career chances disappearing. In this light, the West can only stick to its principles and maintain its policy of engagement of and cooperation with the Russian military - always in the consciousness that Russian governments will come and go, the Russian military will remain.

Our objective remains to establish European and Eurasian security with and not against Russia. However, this is not a one-way street. While it is certainly not possible to create European security *without* Russia, it seems in present times equally unlikely that security can be established *with* Russia. Nonetheless, developing a political and economic partnership with the EU remains one of the most important tasks in the near future. The West has already included Russia into the Group of Seven and Moscow must now be enabled to play a full part in the process of international cooperation. The strengthening of the OSCE and in particular of preventive diplomacy and crisis management measures will become one of the most important tasks on the common agenda for the twenty-first century, albeit Russia itself has considerably undermined its own OSCE-policy in the Chechen wars as well as the future of the OSCE itself. Moreover, NATO's and Russia's deepening long-term involvement in the Balkans will not only have a profound effect on the alliance's future, but also on the mutual relationship with Russia that will reshape the security environment across the Eurasian landmass. In this regard, close political and military cooperation will be the major pre-condition to secure the peace in Kosovo and Bosnia and the stabilization of the whole of Southeastern Europe.

Conclusions and Perspectives

The Kosovo crisis and NATO's military intervention have certainly aggravated tensions between Moscow and the West. But the deeper roots of this tension go back to the early 1990s and the illusions of the Russian elite. With the end of the Cold War and the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, the old and new political elite was dreaming about a strategic partnership between two former adversaries, guided by the idea of a democratic bipolar world. Confrontation was supposed to be replaced by cooperation between the two superpowers but the world was to remain bipolar. Western policies at that time had strengthened that kind of impression on the Russian side in many ways. What has been overlooked was the fact that the entire international system has changed – partly because Russia as the main successor state of the former Soviet Union was no longer a superpower. Economically, even its great power status in Europe and Eurasia was very questionable. Its economic foundation and status, already been weak and shaken at that time, has been further eroded. But Russian political consciousness and strategic thinking was and is still guided by that kind of illusion and sometimes even obsession being symbolically equal on the political and military level with the US. Instead of looking forward and thinking strategically into the future, Russia's political elite is primarily guided by the past and its former great power status, thus compensating for its much lower living standards in contrast to Western Europe and the US.

Evgeny Primakov, former Foreign Minister (January 1996 to August 1998) and Prime Minister (August 1998 to May 1999) has also in the West the reputation of being a real professional in the foreign policy field. But he is also a symbol for the Cold War nostalgia and pragmatic neo-conservatism afflicting many of the old Soviet foreign policy elite who remained in key positions of power in Russia in the Post-Cold War era. He opposed, frequently and openly, in particular the United States on many issues, including Iran, Iraq, NATO issues and the war in former Yugoslavia.

Unsurprisingly, since the beginning of NATO strikes in Kosovo, Moscow adopted a counter-strategy against the West which had often nothing to do with the conflict itself but much more with domestic politics and its own 'soul searching' for the Russian identity. Russian General Staff officers and even political officials went so far as to threaten the West by deploying tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus and Russian regions near the Western borders.¹¹¹ That kind of compensating Russia's low political status and influence in European affairs revealed more Moscow's diplomatic weakness (both towards the West as well as Milosevic) rather than any kind of real political strength and influence. The nuclear factor, unfortunately, thus has become 'the last source of might Russia has as a Great Power.'¹¹²

Furthermore, Russia's 'Zapad-99' military exercise in June 1999, the renewed Russian testing of US air defenses by Russian TU-95 bombers flying just about 200 miles close to the US coastline in September 1999 and Russia's test-fire of an anti-ballistic missile on 3 November 1999, that has been permitted under the 1972 ABM treaty to send a strong signal of a 'possible symmetrical and asymmetrical response' to potential U.S. violations of the treaty have all underscored that kind of thinking.¹¹³ In the light of these remilitarization tendencies already underway in Russia's foreign and security policies, additional air-missile and sea exercises in October and November 1999 were another warning to the West not to interfere in Russia's internal affairs (Chechnya).¹¹⁴ It highlighted the military's frustration of losing the former superpower status and of seeking ways to compensate that kind of frustration and the declining military prowess vis-à-vis NATO and the US. Even former Prime Minister Yevgenii Primakov is worried about increasing anti-Western sentiment and a growing anti-Chechen mood that may let 'the genie of nationalism' out of the multiethnic Russian bottle, which would be 'extremely dangerous.'¹¹⁵

An important international role of Russia and an corresponding leverage in world affairs, however, requires consolidated political power and stability at home. In this light, Russia's potential instability in its domestic politics and unpredictability in its foreign and security policies remains one of the biggest security challenge for NATO and Europe in this new century.

Against this background, Moscow's decline as a world power probably cannot be 'solved' – it appears that Russia will have to accept the status of a second-tier power though Moscow has still demonstrated during the Kosovo conflict that it retains some influence over European security. But this gesture does not solve any of Russia's real problems at the domestic and foreign policy fronts. If its leaders are following rather prudent reform policies and a cooperative diplomacy with the West, a further and more serious disintegration of the state can be avoided. At the same time, the EU and NATO should avoid ignoring or containing Russia in a confrontational way.¹¹⁶ The West should show some reasonable discretion and respect for Russian sensibilities without, however, neglecting the security perceptions and interests of other Eurasian states. Nor should the West allow Moscow to exercise a veto over Western pursuit of fundamental security interests. It should cooperate with Russia in all areas where it is possible without accepting nationalist or even neo-imperial tendencies of its policies (i.e. in Central Asia and the Caspian region where new energy projects provide numerous incentives for multilateral political and economic cooperation between Russia and the West) in order to prevent the most pessimistic scenarios from happening. On the other side, any constructive Russian leverage can be achieved only through lasting mutual cooperation with the West. A cooperative Western policy is not a one-way street — a lesson which Moscow seems presently rather to ignore.

In any view, Russia's socio-economic and political revival will take at least much longer than most Western observers and politicians believe (at least one or two generations). Many doubts exist as to whether the West is really prepared itself to think strategically about such a long-term security challenge and, simultaneously, be able to define an adequate strategy for the 'Russian security challenge'. Consequently, the West has and will have to cope with Russia's weakness and steady decline in the forthcoming decade rather than to worry about a return of Russia as a Great Power or a military superpower. Thus a continual management of Russia's transition phase, inherent weakness and some forms of unpredictability will occupy our attention and concerns in the coming years and decades. That raises manifold challenges of Russia's domestic and foreign policies for its neighbors and the West. If we accept this assumption, then it seems that presently neither the West nor Russia itself has really recognized the consequences for their own policies and the challenges ahead for European and Eurasian security.

However, Russia's decline also provides new opportunities for mutual cooperation. Russia is no longer a threat for the West and therefore we need no real containment; on the other hand Moscow needs Western support (including peacekeeping and peace-enforcement) and understanding for its real security threats: the 'soft

underbelly' of its Southern Tier, fueled by local conflicts; ethnic conflicts, border disputes and migration; center-periphery ties and the need for strengthening a unified federation from below; nuclear and arms smuggling and illegal arms as well as military technology transfers; organized crime, pollution, disease and social collapse.

In the mid-term perspective, the current Chechen war and the insufficiencies as well as inability of Russia's armed forces might force a new interest on the Russian side for a closer cooperation on multilateral peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions with NATO.

In the short-term future, however, the Kosovo war and now even more the second Chechen war has deepened the mistrust between Russia and the West. Moscow's demonization of an entire people of Chechens has not only offended many in the West and even in Russia itself, but also severely limited Russia's future options in the Caucasus. It has reduced chances for a negotiated peaceful settlement, particularly for the long-term future. In contrast, a wider, longer, and never-ending bloodier and costly conflict seems ever more likely, with a new Chechen generation growing up, knowing and having experienced only a disastrous indiscriminate warfare against their entire peoples.

Although I myself have more questions than answers, we need a clearer and much deeper investigation into the mid- and long-term strategic consequences of Russia's decline for regional stability as well as for the international system.

In the long-term, new political forces and leaders will have to address new agendas and define new strategies. With greater familiarity and increased cooperation over time, new real opportunities will be open to Moscow for constructive engagement and thus new opportunities to help shape the Eurasian security architecture of the next millennium will become more clearer and more attractive.

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¹ Ye. Primakov, 'Russia: Reforms and Foreign Policy', *International Affairs* (Moscow), Aug. 1998, pp. 1-6, here p. 3.

² Quoted here following Floriana Fossato/Sophie Lambroschini, 'Russia: Yeltsin Replaces Prime Minister Stepashin With Putin', RFE/RL Analysis, 9 Aug. 1999.

³ For the US debate 'Who Lost Russia?' see Michael Dobbs and Paul Blustein, *International Herald Tribune* (henceforth IHT), 13 Sept. 1999.

⁴ See also Severn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987).

- 5 See also C. Dale Walton, 'The Decline of the Third Rome: Russia's Prospects as a Great Power', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 12/1 (March 1999), pp. 51-63.
- 6 Thomas E. Graham, 'World Without Russia?', Jamestown Foundation, June 1999.
- 7 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (Unwin Hyman 1988).
- 8 See also Heinrich Vogel, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), 29 July 1999, p. 10.
- 9 See Paul Goble, 'Russia: The Long Shadow of the Second Economy'. *RFE/RL Analysis* from Washington, 24 Sept. 1999.
- 10 See Floriana Fossato, 'Russia. Fears Wane, Shadow Lingers of August 1998 Economic Meltdown', *RFE/RL Analysis*, 12 Aug. 1999.
- 11 See *RFE/RL News Today*, 25 Oct. 1999.
- 12 See Michael Lelyveld, 'Russia: Some in West Doubt Economic Rebound', *RFE/RL Analysis*, 25 Oct. 1999.
- 13 See Robert Lyle, 'Russia: Institute Estimates That \$2 Billion a Month Leaves Country', *RFE/RL Analysis*, 27 September 1999.
- 14 See also Roland Goetz, 'Die Kluft zwischen Russland und dem Westen. Historische Perspektive und Szenarien'. *Berichts des BIOst*, No. 15/1999, Cologne, 20 April 1999.
- 15 For a well-balanced analysis before the present outbreak of the Chechnya war see Emil Payin, 'Chechnya and Other Conflicts in Russia', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 6/1998, pp. 152-164.
- 16 See also 'Russlands Perspektiven. Kritische Faktoren und moegliche Entwicklungen bis 2010', *Berichte des BIOst*, Cologne, No. 25/1999 (6 July 1999).
- 17 See also Nicholas Eberstadt, 'Russia to Sick to Matter?', *Policy Review*, June & July 1999, No. 95 – <http://www.policyreview.com/jun99/eberstadt.html>.
- 18 See *RFE/RL Daily News Line*, 3 Sept. 1999.
- 19 See Andrew F. Tully, 'Russia: Expert Sees Dangerous Population Decline', *RFE/RL Analysis*, 25 Oct. 1999.
- 20 Irina Maltseva, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23 July 1999, p. 2.
- 21 For population issues and migration problems in this part of Russia see Norbert Wein, 'Bevoelkerungsbewegungen im asiatischen Russland', *Osteuropa*, 9/1999, pp. 908-922.
- 22 See also Martin Nicholson, *Towards a Russia of the Regions*, IISS-Adelphi-Paper, No.330 (Oxford-NY: OUP for IISS 1999).
- 23 See Chikahito Harada, *Russia and North-east Asia*, IISS-Adelphi Paper, No.310 (Oxford-NY: OUP for IISS 1997), pp. 20 ff.
- 24 See Nicholson, 'Towards a Russia of the Regions', (note 22) p. 57.
- 25 See Dmitry Gornostayev, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 March 1998, pp. 1 and 6.
- 26 See 'Kontseptsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii', *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 26 Dec. 1997, pp. 4-5.
- 27 To Sergeev's military reform concept of two phases see Igor Sergeev, 'Novaya Rossiya, novaya armiya', *Vestnik voennoy informatsii*, 10/1997, pp. 1-4. See also in context Franz Walter, 'Militaerreform in Russland. Voraussetzung und Bestandteil des russischen Transformationsprozesses', *Osteuropa*, Nov.-Dec. 1999, pp. 1176-1187; idem, 'Wie in Russland Militärpolitik gemacht wird', *Osteuropa*, Jan. 2000, pp. 45-55.
- 28 See, inter alia, Frank Umbach, 'Zwang zur Militaerreform', *Internationale Politik* 9/1996, pp. 57-62, here p. 58 f.
- 29 To the background see also Vladimir Ivanov, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2 Oct. 1999, p. 11.
- 30 See the "Press Conference with Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeev, Federal Information Systems Corporation. Official Kremlin Int' News Broadcast, 9 July 1999 (here via Internet: <ftp://nautilus.org/nnnnet/references/Sergeev070999.txt>), pp. 1-10, here p. 6.
- 31 Vladimir Mukhin, 'The Russian Army Changes its Image', *FSU 15 Nations: Policy and Strategy*, May 1999, p. 2 f., here p. 3.
- 32 See IISS (Ed.), *The Military Balance 1999*- Oxford-NY: OUP for IISS 1999), pp. 104-18, here p. 108 ff.
- 33 See Alexei Arbatov, 'Military Reform in Russia. Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects', *International Security* 23/4 (Spring 1998) pp. 83-134, here p. 98.

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- 34 Oleg Odnokolenko, *Segodnya*, 8 July 1999, p. 1.
- 35 See *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 5-11 Febr. 1999.
- 36 See also Richard F. Staar, 'A Russian Rearmament Wish List', *Orbis* (Fall 1999) pp. 605-12, here p. 606.
- 37 See *ibid*, p. 608 f.
- 38 *ibid*, p. 611.
- 39 To the prospects of Russia's military reform see in particular Aleksei G. Arbatov, 'Voennaya reforma: doktrina, voiska, finansy', *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya (MEiMO)* 4/1997, pp. 5-21 and *idem*, 'Military Reform in Russia'.
- 40 See also *Segodnya*, 14 February 1998.
- 41 See *Jane's Defence Weekly* (hereafter JDW), 25 Aug. 1999.
- 42 Mukhin, 'The Russian Army Changes its Image', (note 31) p. 2.
- 43 See Sergey Sokut, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 12 Aug. 1999, pp. 1-2.
- 44 See the chapter of Russia in: IISS 'The Military Balance 1999-2000' (note 32) pp.104-18, here p. 104 ff.
- 45 See Shamil Idiatullin, *Kommersant-daily*, 16 Sept. 1999, p. 3.
- 46 See Sophie Lambroschini, 'Russia: Tartastan's Conscripts Won't Fight in Dagestan', *RFE/RL Analysis*, 21 Sept. 1999.
- 47 See Shamil Idiatullin, *Kommersant-daily*, 24 Sept. 1999, p. 3.
- 48 See also Alexander Alf, *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozreniye*, No.21/1999 and Irina Zhirmova, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 8 July 1999, pp. 1-2.
- 49 See Alexander Alf, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 May 1999, p. 2.
- 50 See JDW, 25 Aug. 1999, p. 10.
- 51 See *Jane's Intelligence Review* (hereafter JIR), Aug. 1999, p. 7.
- 52 See Oleg Odnokolenko, *Segodnya*, 23 Sept. 1999, p. 1.
- 53 See also Mark Galeotti, 'Uniting Russia's Nuclear Forces', *JIR*, April 1999, pp. 8-9.
- 54 See also *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 22 Oct. 1999, p. 11.
- 55 See Pavel Felgengauer, *Segodnya*, 6 May 1999, pp. 1-2 and David Hoffman, *IHT*, 1 September 1999.
- 56 See again 'Kontseptsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii'.
- 57 For details see Frank Umbach, 'Nuclear Proliferation Modernization and Proliferation Challenges in East Asia and Prospects for Cooperation - A View from Europe', in Kurt W. Radtke and Raymond Feddema (eds.), 'Comprehending Security in Asia: Views From Asia and the West on a Changing Security Environment' (Leyden: Brill 2000), pp. 66-133, here pp. 78 ff.
- 58 See *Krasnaya zvezda*, 9 Oct. 1999, pp. 3-4, here p.3. In context see also Andrey Korbut, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 13 Oct. 1999, p. 3 and the interview with the First Deputy of the Chief of the General Staff, General-Colonel Valeriy Manilov, *ibid*, 23 Oct. 1999, p. 1.
- 59 See *Krasnaya zvezda*, 9 Oct. 1999, pp. 3-4, Section 1.24, p. 3.
- 60 See *ibid*, Sections 2.4 and 2.5, p. 4.
- 61 Russian specialists in control of the "Kazbek" system for the country's nuclear weapons have warned that the system needs urgently repair, but there are no funds available – see Kirill Belyaninov, *Noviye Izvestia*, 2 July 1999, pp. 1 and 7.
- 62 Bruce Blair and Clifford Gaddy, 'Russia's Aging War Machine. Economic Weakness and the Nuclear Threat', *Brooking Reviews*, Summer 1999, pp. 10-13, here p. 12.
- 63 For details of that crisis see F.Umbach, 'Nuclear Proliferation Modernization and Proliferation Challenges' (note 57) p. 77 f.
- 64 This document is to some extent unique because it is the first time that funding for a military program has become the subject of a federal law - see also Vladimir Yermolin, *Izvestiya*, 17 June 1999, p. 2.
- 65 See *idem*, *Segodnya*, 23 October 1997, p. 1 and in context F.Umbach, 'Nuclear Proliferation Modernization and Proliferation Challenges' (note 57) here again pp. 78 ff.
- 66 See in detail F.Umbach (note 57) pp. 74 ff.
- 67 See also Vadim Soloviov, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 8 May 1999, pp. 1 and 3.

⁶⁸ The exercise from 21-26 June 1999 involved about 50.000 officers and generals from the Barents Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the South. The headquarters and command structures of five military districts (the Leningrad, Moscow, Caucasus, Trans-Volga, and Volga) and three fleets (the Northern, Baltic and the Black Sea) were involved in the exercise as well as 20 command structures of formations of branches of service, and the command of three formations of Airborne Troops. The scenario of a (NATO) '*launched aggression against Russia and its allies*' included 450 aircraft of the '*enemy's*' tactical and strategic aviation and 120 guided missiles striking Belarus before Russia reacted with limited nuclear strikes '*against the countries from whose territories the offensive was launched*' – see Igor Korotchenko and Vladimir Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23 June 1999, p. 2; Alexander Babakin, *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 26 June 1999, p.2; Yuri Golotyuk, *Izvestia*, 29 June 1999, p. 2; Dmitry Litovkin and Roman Fomishenko, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 13 July 1999, p. 2 and Alexander Golts, *Itogi*, No.31, 3 Aug. 1999, pp. 12-15. For Western sources see also Michael R. Gordon, *IHT*, 12 July 1997, p. 2 and IISS (Ed.), '*The Military Balance*' (note 32) p. 105 f.

The 'Zapad-99' exercise in June 1999 was already planned in 1998 and had originally nothing to do with the war in the Balkans. Nonetheless, the Kosovo war had a serious effect on this exercise. It indicated that the Russian military still gears itself toward fighting the Western alliance – see Golts, *Itogi* (above). In contrast to the real defense needs of Russia, the pompous and expensive military exercise used up a year's allotment of fuel for training purposes – see Oksana Antonenko, '*Russia, NATO and European Security*', *Survival* 41/4 (Winter 1999-2000) pp. 124-44, here p. 135.

Interestingly, in this light of an underlying NATO-threat scenario, to be sure, it must have been somehow disappointing for the Russian General Staff officers and other high-ranking officials from Russia's defense ministry when President Boris Yeltsin shortly after the end of this exercise visited the ministry for the very first time with a high-level government representative delegation (accompanied by Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin, Chief of the Presidential Administration Alexander Voloshin, Vice Premier Ilya Klebanov, Vladimir Putin – at that time Director of the FSS and Chairman of the Security Council, Minister of Finance, Mikhail Kasyanov, Economics Minister Andrei Shapovalyants, Interior Minister Vladimir Rushailov, Minister of Emergency Situations Sergei Shoigu, and FAGLI Director Vladimir Matyukhin) and declared that the threat of a large-scale military aggression against Russia '*is something from sci-fic books*' – see Ilya Bulavinov, *Kommersant-daily*, 3 July 1999, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁹ For these plans see 'Letter of June 1999. Security Council Meeting: What Is Under the Veil of Secrecy?', *PIR Arms Control Letters*, Moscow, 9 June 1999 (via Internet: <http://pircenter.org/acl/messages/65.html>); Richard Paddoc, *Los Angeles Times*, 14 September 1999 and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), 10 November 1999, p. 10.

⁷⁰ See also David Hoffmann, *Washington Post*, 31 August 1999, p. 1.

⁷¹ Yevgeniy A. Fedosov and Igor D. Spasskiy, *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 23-29 July, 1999, p. 6.

⁷² See 'Letter of June 1999. Security Council Meeting: What Is Under the Veil of Secrecy?'.
⁷³ Alexander Golts, *Itogi*, No. 20, 18 May 1999, pp. 28-29. See also Vladimir Georgiev, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 12 May 1999, p. 2.

⁷⁴ See Dean A. Wilkening, 'The Future of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Force', *Survival* 40/3 (Autumn 1998) pp. 89-111 and Umbach, 'Nuclear Proliferation Modernization and Proliferation Challenges (note 57) here p. 81 f.

⁷⁵ See *Interfax*, 28 Sept. 1999.

⁷⁶ For the problems and challenges of Russia's early warning systems, but denying that Russia is becoming partially blind, see the interview with RVSN Commander-in-Chief, Vladimir Yakovlev, in: *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, No. 32, 20-26 Aug. 1999, pp.1 and 6.

⁷⁷ See 'US 'Not Interested' in Russia's Ratifying START II', *Interfax* (Moscow), 23 August 1999. To a balanced analysis by Russian experts see Vladimir Bogomolov and Sergei Kortunov, 'Russian Nuclear Strategy', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 2/1998, pp. 23-37.

⁷⁸ Yu. Fedorov, 'Interest Groups and Russia's Foreign Policy', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 6/1998, pp. 173-183, here p. 173.

- ⁷⁹ See also Michael McFaul, 'A Precarious Peace. Domestic Politics in the Making of Russian Foreign Policy', *International Security*, Winter 1997/98, pp. 5-35.
- ⁸⁰ Gazprom is paying a quarter of all tax to the state budget and is responsible for a quarter of Russia's foreign currency earnings - see also Igor Khripunov and Mary Matthews, 'Russia's Oil and Gas Interest Groups and Its Foreign Policy Agenda', *Problems of Post Communism*, No. 3 (May-June) 1996, pp. 38-49.
- ⁸¹ See Chrystia Freeland/John Thornhill/Andrew Gowers, *Financial Times*, 1 November 1996, p. 15.
- ⁸² See also Eberhard Schneider, 'Aussenpolitische Aktivitaeten russischer Regionen', *Aktuelle Analysen des B/Ost*, Nr. 38/1998, 21 September 1998 and Martin Nicholson, 'Towards a Russia of the Regions', pp. 62 ff.
- ⁸³ For the leverage and influence of Russia's defense ministry on Russia's foreign and security policies until 1995/96 see also Frank Umbach, 'The Role and Influence of the Military Establishment in Russia's Foreign and Security Policies in the Yeltsin Era', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 9/3 (September 1996) pp. 467-500.
- ⁸⁴ See also *Izvestiya*, 4 Nov. 1999, p. 1; *ibid*, 9 Nov. 1999, p.1 and Vladimir Ermolin, *ibid*, 13 Nov. 1999, p. 1. Only few Russian politicians, such as Grigori Javlinski and influential advisers, such as Andrei Piontkovski (director of the Moscow Institute for Strategic Studies), have warned against the Russian strategy and the role of the military determining the entire policy in the Chechen war - see *Die Welt*, 19 Nov. 1999, p. 10 and *ibid*, 23 Nov. 1999, p. 7.
- ⁸⁵ See also Stephen J. Blank and Alvin Z. Rubinstein (Eds.), *Imperial Decline. Russia's Changing Role in Asia* (Durham-London: Duke UP n.d.).
- ⁸⁶ See also Andrei Korbut, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 May 1999, p. 5; Vladimir Yermolin, *Izvestiya*, 22 May 1999, p. 3 and Liz Fuller, 'Mission Impossible?', *RFE/RL Analyses*, 10 Sept. 1999.
- ⁸⁷ See the interview of Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, *Financial Times*, 25 Oct. 1999.
- ⁸⁸ See also Yevgeni Krutikov, *Izvestia*, 24 June 1999, p. 3. At the OSCE meeting in Nov. 1999, Russia signed an agreement to close two military bases by mid-2001 and the other remaining two bases by 1 July 2002 - see Konstantin Varlamov, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23 Nov. 1999, p. 5.
- ⁸⁹ Furthermore, another letter of intent of an underwater gas-pipeline from Turkmenistan via Azerbaijan and Georgia to Baku and Ceyhan was agreed at the OSCE summit in Nov. 1999.
- ⁹⁰ Gennady Sysoev, *Kommersant-daily*, 13 May 1999, p. 2.
- ⁹¹ Dominique Moisi, *Financial Times*, 31 May 1999, p. 12.
- ⁹² See again 'Kontseptsiiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii'.
- ⁹³ See Section 1.5 of the draft military doctrine, *Krasnaya zvezda*, 9 Oct. 1999, p. 3.
- ⁹⁴ See V.Obchinnikov, *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 16 June 1999, p. 7.
- ⁹⁵ See, for instance, Gennady Sysoev, *Kommersant-daily*, 3 June 1999, p. 4. Interestingly, the Chinese side speaks always rather about a "Strategic Cooperative Partnership" with Russia and not about a real 'Strategic Partnership', which indicates a different and ultimately narrow and more limited understanding of their 'strategic alliance' - see, for instance, Xia Yishan, 'A Brief Analysis of Sino-Russian Relations under the new Circu[m]stances', *Foreign Affairs Journal* (Beijing), Sept.1999, pp. 33-40 and Zhang Buren, 'Cooperation Cements Sino-Russian Relations', *Contemporary International Relations* (Beijing), Febr. 1999, pp.9-12. From a western view see Jennifer Anderson, *The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership*, IISS/Adelphi Paper No.315 (Oxford-NY: OUP for IISS 1997).
- ⁹⁶ See Yuri Golotyuk, *Izvestia*, 9 June 1999, p. 1.
- ⁹⁷ Chikahito Harada, 'Russia and North-east Asia'. p. 46.
- ⁹⁸ See also Heinz Timmermann, 'Russland: Strategischer Partner der Europaeischen Union? Interessen, Impulse, Widersprueche', *Osteuropa* 10/1999, pp. 991-1009, here p. 995.
- ⁹⁹ Harada, 'Russia and North-east Asia' (note 97) p. 74.
- ¹⁰⁰ See also Antonenko, 'Russia, NATO and European Security' (note 68).
- ¹⁰¹ Col.Gen. Leonid Ivashov, 'Russia-NATO: Matters of Cooperation', *International Affairs* 6/1998, pp. 110-19, here p. 116.
- ¹⁰² See also, for instance, Boris Kazantsev, 'Serious Concern over New NATO-Strategy', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 2/1999, pp. 23-28 and *Krasnaya zvezda*, 22 July 1997, p. 2.

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- ¹⁰³ See Boris Volkhonsky and Gennadi Sysoyev, *Kommersant-daily*, 24 July 1999, p. 2; *RFE/RL Daily News*, 12 Nov. 1999 and Dmitry Gornostaev, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23 July 1999, p. 1.
- ¹⁰⁴ S.Cherniavskii, 'Southern Caucasus in NATO Plans', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 6/1998, pp. 151-145. See also in context Mikhail Vignansky, *Segodnya*, 15 May 1999, p. 3; Yury Golotyuk, *Izvestiya*, 15 May 1999, p. 2; Sergi Putilov, *Interfaks-Vremja*, No.18-19, 30 April-13 May 1999, p. 7 and Mekhman Gafarly, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 29 May 1999, p. 5; Lyudmila Romanova, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 20 November 1999, p. 5; Vladimir Sysoev, *ibid*, 25 November 1999, pp. 1 and 6. and Viktor Ilyuchin, *Nezavisimaya gazeta-Sodruzhestvo*, No.10, 24 November 1999, p. 5/13.
- ¹⁰⁵ The Deputy Director of the European Cooperation Department of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Boris Kazantsev, 'NATO: Obvious Bias to the Use of Force', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 4/1999, pp. 38-42, here p. 39.
- ¹⁰⁶ Vladimir Baranovskij, 'Russia's Interests Are Too Important', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 3/1999, pp. 4-14 and Alexander Ruzsky, *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, 18 May 1999, p. 3.
- ¹⁰⁷ Vladimir Baranovskij, 'Russia's Interests' (note 106), p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5.
- ¹⁰⁹ Nikolai Kuchin, 'Russia's Balkan Account', *New Times*, Aug. 1999, pp. 46-47.
- ¹¹⁰ Andrei Grachev, 'A War for Peace. Russian Paratroopers Try on Blue Helmets', *ibid*, pp. 42-3, here p. 42.
- ¹¹¹ See also 'Letter of April 1999. Russian Nuclear Reaction to the Kosovo Crisis'. PIR Arms Control Letters, PIR Center, Moscow, 20 April 1999.
- ¹¹² *Ibid*.
- ¹¹³ It was the first time since March 1993 the Russian air forces had flown so near a NATO's member's airspace, which prompted the US Air Force to send a pair of F-15 fighters to escort them – see also "Press Conference with Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeyev", Federal Information Systems Corporation. Official Kremlin Int' News Broadcast, 9 July 1999, here p. 2; Allen Baker, 'Russian Bombers Approach Alaska', *Associated Press*, 18 Sept. 1999; Valeriy Aleksin, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 19 Nov. 1999, pp. 1-2 and Robert Suroa, *IHT*, 19 Nov. 1999, p. 7.
- ¹¹⁴ See Roberto Suro, *IHT*, 19 Nov. 1999, p. 7.
- ¹¹⁵ See *RFE/RL Daily News*, 18 Nov. 1999.
- ¹¹⁶ See also the convincing arguments made by Charles J. Dick, 'History Warns the West that Russia Cannot be Ignored', *JIR*, Nov. 1999, pp. 10-12.